CONTINUITY

A Reply
TO
CARDINAL BOURNE

BY
HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM

Printed by request

London:
REES, LTD., 5 & 7 REGENT STREET, S.W.
1924

PRICE SIXPENCE

30.38
H398c

280.3S H398c
Class Book
General Theological Seminary Library
Chelsea Square, New York

PRESENTED BY
Soc'y for Promoting Religion and Learning

CONTINUITY

A REPLY

CONTINUITY

A Reply
TO
CARDINAL BOURNE

Francis
1861—

BY
HERBERT HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM

1863 —

Printed by request

London:
HUGH REES, LTD., 5 & 7 REGENT STREET, S.W.
1924

CAL. THEO. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

280.3S
H398c

77106

GEN. THEOL. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Roman Catholics of Sunderland celebrated the 1,250th anniversary of the foundation of Monkwearmouth Monastery with natural and quite legitimate enthusiasm ; and their celebration was regarded by their Anglican neighbours with sympathy and goodwill. CARDINAL BOURNE'S visit for the occasion aroused much public interest. Unfortunately his Eminence took the opportunity of making an elaborate attack on the historic character and claim of the Church of England. To this attack the largest publicity was given in the local press, and the feeling was general that some public notice should be taken of it. I was appealed to by several of the leading clergy, and in deference to their request I came to Sunderland and preached the Sermon which is here published. I have added to it the earlier Sermon preached in Monkwearmouth on S. Peter's Day.

HERBERT DUNELM.

CONTINUITY

I.

THE ANGLICAN CLAIM TO CONTINUITY WITH THE PRÆ-REFORMATION CHURCH

Preached in BISHOPWEARMOUTH CHURCH, on the 13th Sunday after Trinity, September 14th, 1924

WITH FREEDOM DID CHRIST SET US FREE: STAND FAST, THEREFORE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN IN A YOKE OF BONDAGE.—*Galatians* v, 1.

1.—On S. PETER'S Day last I preached in S. PETER'S Church, Monkwearmouth, on a very interesting occasion. The 1,250th anniversary of the foundation of a monastery, on the very site now occupied by the parish church, was fittingly celebrated with solemn acts of religion. I was very anxious to avoid anything that could give a controversial note to the commemoration, in which, as it seemed to me, all considering Christians, whatever their denominational description might be, ought naturally to take part. The subject of my Sermon was "*The*

Witness of Time to Christianity," and the main purpose of my preaching was to induce in Christians as such a deeper sense of the value of CHRIST'S Religion, and a worthier responsibility with respect to it. Of necessity I recalled a long history, of which the significance has been variously appraised, and I could not avoid alluding to events concerning which religious men feel very differently; but I did my best to be just, and to use language which, if it could not command universal assent, would at least wound nobody's feelings. Thus I emphasised the value of BENEDICT BISCOP'S influence in strengthening the ties which, at that distant age, united the infant English Church with the great See of Rome, and I was careful to point out the considerable benefits which that union brought to our ancestors. Again, when I had to refer to the destruction of the monasteries, I adopted a language which was studiously chosen to avoid, so far as possible, any offence to legitimate susceptibilities. For, indeed, it seemed to me that the only rightful spiritual purpose with which such a religious commemoration could be undertaken and carried through was, not the exaltation of one Church against another, but the leading of all Christians to a thankful remembrance of GOD'S abounding mercies, and to a more worthy treatment of HIS priceless gift of the Gospel.

2.—It was, then, with some surprise, and very much regret, that I read the reports of CARDINAL BOURNE'S recent addresses, which not only bore a sharply controversial character, but were even thrown into the form of a public challenge. Even so, I do not think that I could have brought myself to take any notice of them, had it not been represented to me by several of the clergy that the Cardinal's words had caused distress and perplexity among some of their parishioners. To that appeal, of course, I could not be indifferent, and, therefore, I have come here to make a short, but I hope sufficient, answer to the challenge which has been thrown down; and if in doing so I must needs give pain to some devout Roman Catholics I sincerely regret it, and must beg them to remember that I have no choice.

For, indeed, I regard with genuine goodwill the great and venerable Church in which CARDINAL BOURNE holds worthily such exalted rank. I must needs think, of course, that the Roman Catholic Church has departed far from the truth as it has been given to us in the Revelation of GOD in CHRIST, and on many weighty grounds I am bound in conscience to stand outside its communion, but I should be blind not to see the proofs of Divine Grace within it, and sinful not to thank GOD for the spiritual work and witness which it carries on

throughout the world. It seemed to me very natural that the Cardinal should visit a part of England in which, thanks to the great immigration of Irish people during recent years, there are many Roman Catholics; and I think he is certainly entitled to edify his flock by making the most of the many points of agreement between the Founders of the English Church and the Church of Rome. I think, moreover, that he does nothing but good when he emphasises the "extreme importance at the present time in England of facing facts whether in religion or in politics, and the extreme danger of being satisfied with those vague inaccuracies which are only too current at the present time both in the religious and political world." When, however, he proceeds to deny the continuity of the Church of England with the Church of BENEDICT BISCOP and BEDE, and suggests that the small branch of the Latin Church in England, over which he presides, is alone entitled to claim succession with the pre-Reformation Church, I must needs dispute his position, and take up his challenge. That challenge was thus stated:

> "On what grounds can the Established Church of this country when it joins—as it does, and we are glad that it does—in sympathetic commemoration of the great events of the past—*how can it on any grounds at all claim*

any sort of ecclesiastical continuity with the old Church of this country before the Reformation days?"

That is the Challenge to which I desire to make reply.

3.—Let me begin by making clear what precisely is implied by our claim to continuity. Why does the BISHOP OF DURHAM think it worth while to remind himself, and the people over whom he has spiritual authority, that he is the true successor of S. AIDAN and S. CUTHBERT, a link in the great chain of eighty-six bishops which connects the twentieth century with the seventh? The answer carries us at once to the Creed into which we were baptised. Every Sunday we rehearse our Baptismal confession—"I believe in the holy Catholic Church." At every Eucharist we repeat our conviction—"I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church." That Church came into existence in Palestine through the preaching of the Apostles: on the day of Pentecost it received from God the promised Gift of the Holy Ghost: it has spread far over the earth, and it was founded in these parts some 1,300 years since. It bears the scars of a long and troubled conflict. It has become corrupt, scandalous, divided; but it has persisted, and is recognisable in the world to-day. For it carries the LORD'S Promise—"*Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the age.*"

He has said that "*The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*" Into this Catholic Church men are admitted by Holy Baptism: in its fellowship their souls are nourished by Holy Communion. It is an organised society, in which discipline is maintained by a duly constituted Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. To this Divine Society has been entrusted the task of winning the World for Christ. This task is laid on all Christians as such, and it is the professed and distinctive work of the ordained Ministry. Not to possess continuity with this Church is to have fallen apart from the main stream of Christian witness, to be deprived of the normal and appointed means of Grace, to be outside the Covenant, and left to the "uncovenanted mercies" of the Almighty. Of this Church beyond all question the holy men Benedict Biscop and the Venerable Bede were members; and in claiming continuity with them we are asserting our own membership therein. We, as they, were admitted to that holy fellowship by the Sacrament of Baptism: we, as they, are nourished by the Sacrament of Holy Communion: we, as they, acknowledge the authority of the Apostolic Ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons: we, as they, are taught by the Sacred Scriptures: we, as they, profess the "one faith" as it was set forth of old in the Catholic Creeds.

4.—But CARDINAL BOURNE objects that BENEDICT BISCOP and BEDE were members of what he calls "the Latin Church," and that we are not, and insists that the difference is fatal to our claim to be members of the same Church as theirs. Were they then baptised into the Latin Church? Are the Creeds merely Latin? Is the threefold ministry a Latin monopoly? Is the Catholic Church no more than Latin? Look closely at the argument, first noting an ambiguity in the language. The expression "Latin Church" may mean two very different things. It may mean either the Church of the Latin people, or the Church owning the jurisdiction of the Latin Patriarch, i.e., the Pope of Rome. It is, of course, only in the second sense that BENEDICT BISCOP and BEDE were members of the Latin Church; for they were certainly not Latins, and the Northumbrian Church to which they belonged had received its origin, not from Rome, but from Iona. BEDE'S famous record is entitled "*Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*," i.e., the Church History of the English People. The CARDINAL is quite right in saying that the phrase of Magna Carta "*Ecclesia Anglicana*" does not mean "the Church of England" but "the Church in England." In the thirteenth century the national consciousness was still undeveloped, and the notion of an independent national

Church would have been quite unintelligible. The English Churchman of that age conceived of the Church as an international hierarchy governed from Rome, and held an intensely and crudely sacerdotal notion of the clergy.

5.—Continuity does not mean identity of opinion, or of point of view, or of degree of knowledge, or of stage of culture. BENEDICT BISCOP and BEDE were men of the seventh century, and members of a semi-civilised society. It is given to no man, not even the greatest, to escape from the conditions of his time. I think it is probably true that the mentality of Roman Catholics is nearer than that of Anglicans to the mentality of BENEDICT BISCOP and BEDE, but even so the men of the twentieth century are parted from the men of the seventh by a chasm which no formal agreements can really bridge. A Dutch Professor has recently published a remarkable book, of which an excellent English version has just appeared under the title "*The Waning of the Middle Ages.*" It is an attempt to describe the modes of thinking and living which prevailed in Christendom on the eve of the Reformation. It discloses a state of mind and a point of view so remote from those which are universal among civilised Europeans to-day, that any pretence of continuity in those respects may be dismissed with a smile. We are only concerned with continuity of ecclesiastical life,

and that continuity may go along with the widest divergencies of opinion and belief. CARDINAL BOURNE takes the single point of membership of the Latin Church, and tells us that, in breaking with the Pope, we destroyed our ecclesiastical identity. We reply that our ecclesiastical identity consists in other and more fundamental matters, and that we broke with the Pope for reasons which seemed to us religiously imperative. In fact, we ceased to be Latin in order that we might become more genuinely Catholic and Christian. All the spiritual essentials on which the Church's life depends were jealously guarded by the English Reformers. The Scriptures, the Sacraments, the Threefold Ministry, the Liturgy were all retained; and only those parts of the current tradition which were either plainly incongruous with Catholic Truth, or demonstrably unfavourable to Christian morals, were abolished.

6.—The enormous practical abuses connected with pilgrimages, the popular deification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the worship of saints and relics, the sale of indulgences and dispensations, private masses, and compulsory auricular confession—which had been vainly lamented and denounced for many generations—were at last abolished. The Bible, in a noble vernacular translation, was placed in the hands of the people, thus completing the

work to which the VENERABLE BEDE had devoted the last hours of his life. The public services were revised, simplified, and rendered into the noblest English, and the harsh rule of compulsory celibacy, which had been the cause of the most grievous scandals, was lifted from the clergy. The monasteries, which had plainly outlived their utility, were swept away, and the jurisdiction of the Roman Pope finally abolished. These changes transformed the system of national religion, and they were not carried through without cruel injustice to individuals, and much deplorable violence. But the necessary work was done, and the Church of England entered on the modern epoch as a reformed branch of the Church Catholic, an independent national Church, standing firmly on the old foundations, and maintaining the old Faith, all the more loyally for having disentangled it from the gathered perversions of a thousand years. The Reformation in England, unlike the Reformation in most other countries, was an orderly process, carried through by the national authorities—the Sovereign, the Parliament, and the Convocations. We preserved the ancient ecclesiastical divisions into dioceses and parishes. The Canon Law was still given a measure of validity. There was much confusion, much violence, much cruelty, yet of all these calamities England had notably less than any

other European country. In these calmer days we can review the work of our ancestors, and while thanking GOD for the wisdom and courage which led their course, can do better justice than they did to much which conflicted with their efforts, and was swept ruthlessly away. We shall soon have completed 400 years of independence.

7.—We can read the Reformation now in the light of experience. The Latin Church in England, over which the CARDINAL presides, has continuity, not with the pre-Reformation Church as a whole, but only with that dissentient fragment of it, the "Die-Hards" of 1570, who obeyed the Pope's summons, and went forth from the parish churches. History is gathering the materials for her final verdict in the case of both Churches—the Church of Rome and the Church of England. Since that hour of decision when the die was cast, and the Churches of Europe perforce made their choice, Rome and England have moved ever more widely apart. It could not be otherwise, since they differed as to the Rule of Faith itself. The Church of England asserted in the Sixth Article the sole supremacy of the canonical Scriptures:

> "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it

should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

The Church of Rome in the Decree issued at the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent (1546) added to the Scripture as a co-equal authority those traditions of the Church which, it was alleged, have been orally transmitted from Christ and the Apostles. The Creed of Pope PIUS IV, issued in 1564, requires belief in "Apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions," and in that sense of Scripture which holy Mother Church maintains. Now, inasmuch as the certifying of authentic traditions is wholly in the hands of the Papacy, it follows that, for the Roman Catholic, the authority of Scripture may at any time be altogether superseded by that of Tradition. Since the sixteenth century the Roman Church has greatly increased claims which our forefathers had already found intolerable. The Papacy faces the Churches, which it alienated by its exorbitant pretensions, in the spirit of a REHOBOAM, meeting revolt with a larger claim—"*I will add to your yoke.*" If BENEDICT BISCOP and the VENERABLE BEDE were living now, they would hardly satisfy the requirements of Latin orthodoxy. They would be faced by a new Creed, and by two additional Articles of Belief enacted in the nineteenth century. It is vain to speculate as to what a

man would be and do if he were living in another age than his own, but I may perhaps be pardoned if I confess my belief, that a man so devoted to the Scriptures as the VENERABLE BEDE, and of a spirit so candid as that which breathes from his life and writings, would not have found it easy to assent to doctrines so unhistorical and so unscriptural as the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, imposed on the Roman Church in 1854, and the Infallibility of the Pope, imposed in 1870. When I reflect on the present state of Christendom I incline to think that, while the Reformed Churches are most embarrassed by the weakness of their superstructure, the Unreformed Church of Rome is in trouble with its foundations. The vast Fabrick of the Papal Power is indeed wonderfully imposing. It impresses the imagination: and while it humbles the pride, moves the heart, and kindles the enthusiasm. But that vast Fabrick is reared on a foundation of doubtful legend, arbitrary interpretation, and unwarrantable assumption. It will not bear examination.

8.—"*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" The only test of CHRIST'S Religion which HE Himself authorised HIS disciples to apply is the test of moral fruits. "*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" None of us can attempt to apply that test without fear and trembling. There

is so much to mourn over, and blush for, in our own Church, that we dare not be too critical of any other, lest we come under the Divine censure on those who, in their uncharitable eagerness to mark the mote in their brother's eye, are forgetful of the beam in their own. Nevertheless, since we have been bidden to recognise in the Roman Church nothing less than "GOD'S Holy Catholic Church," and have been roughly told that, by ceasing to obey the Pope, we lost continuity with the Church of our ancestors, and ceased to be a true part of the Holy Catholic Church, I must in all humility insist on the fact, that the "*Fruits of the Spirit*" have been at least as manifest in the Church of England as in the Church of Rome. The succession of the Saints did not cease at the Reformation. We, too, can thank GOD for Heroes of Service and Sacrifice whose memory stirs and sustains us. And on one point I will even dare to claim for the Church of England a recognisable superiority. When the Cardinal referred very properly to the spirit of tolerance which enables men of different religious descriptions to associate together in common service, did it occur to him to reflect on the cause to which that happy change must justly be ascribed? Had he forgotten that, as recently as 1864, the Pope issued the notorious "Syllabus Errorum," in which religious toleration was directly con-

demned, and the rightfulness of religious persecution affirmed? CARDINAL MANNING, a very distinguished predecessor of CARDINAL BOURNE, held the "Syllabus Errorum" to be an infallible pronouncement. Be this as it may, PIUS IX did but give expression to the distinctive spirit of the Papacy. Contrast the brotherly welcome which the Church of England extended to the French Clergy when they fled to this country before the violence of the Revolution, with the churlish refusal of the Roman Catholic authorities in France during the Great War even to allow British Soldiers to worship in the deserted churches. It was a matter of conscience with them to show such heartless disdain to "hereticks." Yes: that is the heaviest count of the indictment. For the test of a Church is the kind of conscience it creates in its members. A perverted conscience is of all spiritual maladies the worst. "*If the Light that is in thee be Darkness,*" said our LORD, "*how great is the Darkness.*" The exaltation of the Papacy, which distinguished the Counter-Reformation and in our own time reached its zenith in the Vatican Council, was marked at every step by a ruthlessness which has no parallel in Christian history, and which is so offensive to the Christian conscience as to make the Pope's claim to be sole and plenary Vicar of CHRIST actually grotesque. "*If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.*"

There have been those within the Latin Church itself who have felt and spoken bitterly about the scandal of this great iniquity. Thus, to give but a single example, the late LORD ACTON, a devout and learned Roman Catholic, sometime Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, wrote with fierce resentment of the Papacy during the Counter-Reformation:

> "But the papacy"—I am quoting from a letter written in 1879 and published in 1917—"contrived murder and massacre on the largest and also on the most cruel and inhuman scale. They were not only wholesale assassins, but they made the principle of assassination a law of the Christian Church and a condition of salvation."*

In the Chapter Library at Durham there is preserved a medal struck by Pope GREGORY XIII to commemorate the Massacre of Protestants in France on S. Bartholomew's Day, 1572, a crime which shocked even that cruel age, but which was highly applauded by the Pope. LORD ACTON'S comment is as just as it is illuminating:

> "The worst criminals were not the men who did the deed. The crime of mobs and courtiers, infuriated by the lust of vengeance and of power, is not so strange a portent as the exultation of peaceful men, influenced

*Selections from the Correspondence of the first Lord Acton, p. 55.

by no present injury or momentary rage, but by the permanent and incurable perversion of moral sense wrought by a distorted piety."†

9.—"*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" Judged by that test the Papacy cannot make good its claim to speak with unique and plenary right in CHRIST'S Name. But I will not close on the note of condemnation, however merited and unavoidable. The record of the Jesuitised Papacy, irreformable because infallible, is not the whole story of the Latin Church. Not even the worst faults and follies of men have been able to arrest the abounding Charity of CHRIST. The horrible fanaticism, which filled Christendom with conscientious crimes, is not all the witness which History bears to Roman Christianity. I prefer to remember the unselfish devotion of that great multitude of CHRIST'S Servants—Sisters of Mercy, parish priests, missionaries, saints—which has through the centuries brought the Light of GOD'S redeeming Love into the darkest scenes of human sin. There are the MARKS OF JESUS on HIS Church, and where they are found, be HIS Children gathered under whatsoever description, there is HIS Church. The Catholic Church, in the generous phrase of the English Liturgy, is the "blessed company of all faithful people," and, whatever errors we

†*The History of Freedom and other Essays*, p. 123.

may fall into as we vainly judge one another. this at least is certain that CHRIST knows His own. I began by deprecating controversy, and by deprecating controversy I will end. This is no time for a strife of Christian Churches. The world in its extreme distress, dazed and broken by the Great War, has no use for hierarchical claims. Its cry is for the Light and Healing of the World's REDEEMER. Churches, not less than individuals, must "lose themselves to gain themselves." The Samaritan, not the Priest or the Levite, satisfies Christ's test of discipleship. "*But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? Or thou again, why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of God.*" We are responsible to HIM, Who knows all, the only JUDGE. If I could rightly have avoided the duty which, however inadequately, I have now performed, I would have done so. But when I was consecrated to the Episcopate I pledged myself to "banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to GOD's Word," and in obedience to that pledge I have preached the Sermon which you have now heard.

For the rest, let me appeal to you, who enjoy the inestimable spiritual blessings which the Reformation secured to our Church and Realm, not to belittle or misuse your heritage: to you Members of the Church of England, Catholic

and Reformed, the words of S. PAUL have direct relevance: *"With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."*

II.

THE WITNESS OF TIME TO CHRISTIANITY

Preached in Monkwearmouth Parish Church on June 29th, 1924, on the occasion of the 1,250th Anniversary of the Foundation of Wearmouth Monastery by Benedict Biscop.

A Thousand Years in Thy Sight are but as Yesterday.—*Psalm* xc, 4.

Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday and To-day, Yea, and for Ever.—*Hebrews* xiii, 8.

The 1,250th anniversary of the founding of the monastery in this place is, indeed, a commemoration of exceptional interest. It carries our thoughts far back over the centuries to the earliest dawn of our national history. No Kingdom of England as yet existed, for the English people had not yet emerged from the tribal state in which they had effected the conquest of Britain. They were slowly groping their way to a consciousness of national unity. They were still governed by local sovereigns, reigning in what we rather loosely call "the Heptarchy." Of these sovereigns now one and

now another acquired a supremacy over the rest: and this supremacy was then unquestionably held by the King of Northumbria. In 674, when BENEDICT BISCOP began his building in this place, the kingdom of Northumbria was held by ECGFRITH, the son of OSWY. The Church was not only winning the English to the profession of Christianity, but also drawing them into a closer unity by its own organisation. With Christianity came Civilisation; and BENEDICT BISCOP played a leading part in bringing our barbarous ancestors into the main stream of European culture. Had Northumbria continued in relation to Iona, from which it had received its Christianity, it would have been exiled from that main stream, and might have been carried into those ecclesiastical and moral confusions which have shadowed the Church of Ireland. But, when at the Synod of Whitby, in 664, the quarrel between Rome and Iona was ended with the victory of Rome, the result was far-reaching and beneficent. For Rome, the ancient capital of the Empire, and the only Apostolic See of the West, was the centre of European civilisation, the treasure house of all that had survived the downfall of the Roman world. To be linked with Rome was to come within the pale of Christian civilisation. Your Commemoration brings together the greatest names of that distant Epoch, when English Christianity

was in the fresh energies of its youth. S. AIDAN and S. OSWALD, S. WILFRID and THEODORE, BENEDICT BISCOP and CEOLFRID, CUTHBERT and the VENERABLE BEDE, S. CHAD and S. HILDA—they all have their place in the historical picture which the very name Monkwearmouth brings before the mind's eye. You can boast of a great antiquity: there are few churches in England, not many in Europe, which can claim an antiquity so great for their ecclesiastical life. Canterbury, Armagh, Iona, York, Jarrow, Monkwearmouth—these have a place of their own in our sacred record. We review a great stretch of Time, and yet not so overwhelmingly great as might once have seemed. For the Frontiers of History are being ever pushed back farther into the Past. Dim forms of long-perished civilisations begin to grow more distinctly on the student's vision as the graves of Egypt and Mesopotamia give up their guarded secrets of ancient faith, culture, and magnificence. "*A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday*," says the Psalmist. Even a thousand years, we know, form but a chapter in the record of History: and that record, read in the Light of Physical Science, is seen to be but a tiny fragment of Time. We English Folk are a proud and ancient people, but in the historian's view we take our place among the younger nations of mankind, and our national record is

but a brief and recent chapter of civilised history. Still 1,250 years make up nearly two-thirds of the Christian Era. Nearly forty generations have come and gone since these ancient walls were reared on the banks of the Wear. What changes they have witnessed. They heard the English tongue in its early forms before it had become a literary language. The English language—the most widely-extended form of human speech, the only form which has the promise of universal acceptance—was beginning to take shape in the poems of CAEDMON and the translations of BEDE, and a little later in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the writings of ALFRED. These walls endured the violence of Danish invasion, and survived the tribulations of the Danish Wars. We recall an epoch of critical importance in the history of England, and for that reason, since in the Providence of GOD, England has come to play so great a rôle in the drama of humanity, an epoch of decisive importance in the history of the world. All the changes and chances of English record are gathered up in the witness of these time-battered walls. From this point of view BISHOP LIGHTFOOT did not speak excessively when, preaching at the millenary festival of the parish church of Chester-le-Street, he said that a thousand years was almost " a representation of eternity " to man. What is it to GOD ? " *A*

thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday," says our Psalmist, "*Seeing that is past as a watch in the night.*"

> "A single day from sunrise to sunset, a night watch come and gone instantaneously for the unconscious slumberer, a fleeting cloud, an arrow's flight, a twinkling of an eye—these images are powerless to describe the nothingness of all measures of time to HIM for whom is no before or after, before Whose Eyes the infinite past and the infinite future are spread as a map, to Whom there is one eternal now."*

"*We are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.*" We pass, but there is ONE Who passes not. The proudest works of Man crumble, and fall to dust: the earth carries the ashes of the Civilisations which have flourished and fallen on its surface. We have our dwelling among the Tombs. Our creeds and philosophies grow strange and fade from mind, but GOD's Truth persists. "*Heaven and earth shall pass away,*" said the LORD, "*but My words shall not pass away.*" And there is That in us which can rise out of the perishing and lay firm hold on the Everlasting. In the flux of Time we can anchor on the Rock of Ages. "*The world passeth away,*

*Leaders in the Northern Church, p. 75.

and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God endureth for ever."

In course of time the monasteries which had been the principal instruments in the Conversion of the English, and continued for many generations to be homes of learning and piety, fell into decay, lost their hold on men's respect, and finally perished in the storms of the Reformation. The parochial system which had grown along with them, and with which they were not rarely in dangerous rivalry, survived the crisis, and within recent years has exhibited an astonishing vitality. We need not belittle or deny the services of Monasticism in the past, while we must needs maintain that its downfall had become inevitable, and served the interest of national religion. For Monasticism had fallen out of touch with the life of the people, and was living on its memories, when the thunderbolt of dissolution fell. The strength of a Church must always be found in its direct approach to human life, and that part of its organisation is most important, and possesses the greatest power of survival, which is concerned with making that approach direct and effective. This is the explanation of the surprising vitality of the parochial system. Monasticism stood in relation to the needs, and moods, and circumstances, which were peculiar to a single epoch. It is the most distinctive growth of mediæval

Christianity, and when all that was properly mediæval in Christianity had passed away, Monasticism was stricken. The parochial system was always tied fast to the wants and conditions of normal life: it varied with those wants and conditions: and so long as life proceeds in a settled order it cannot be wholly superseded, however its particular incidents may vary. Even in the worst periods of our ecclesiastical history there was life in the parishes, where CHRIST'S Religion was uttered in worship, in preaching, in pastoral service, in personal goodness. It was from the parishes that, in the eighteenth century, there came the notable Revival of Religion known as the Methodist Movement, which has affected so profoundly the life of our Diocese. Epworth, with its simple life, its prescribed duty, its strenuous habit, its domestic discipline, its stern doctrine of personal responsibility, has better right than Oxford to be regarded as the source of that mighty stream of spiritual activity which quickened the slumbering conscience of Georgian England. JOHN WESLEY was the true product of the parochial system, and his missionary labours had the effect, not of destroying the parochial system, but of quickening it into new vigour and efficiency. The normal organisation of religion has needed from time to time, and most apparently when the course of the world is

disturbed, and society seems to have become suddenly abnormal, to be supplemented by extraordinary ministries. These have ever existed in the Church of CHRIST along with the regular and settled provision of pastorate, and in "*Evil Days*" of social corruption and political disturbance they have risen to evident and even paramount importance. What the Friars were in the thirteenth century, that the Methodists were in the eighteenth, and the Salvation Army in the nineteenth. The parochial system co-existed with all, and answered to needs which none of them could satisfy.

We review a great stretch of Time, but we must not forget that Time must be measured not by years only, but also by events. So measured the last two centuries mean more in the history of Mankind than many longer periods. Two hundred years ago the industrial development which has revolutionised the life of the English people was still in its early stages. England was mainly the home of an agricultural community, stationary or at least slow-moving, suspicious of changes, ruled by unchallenged, uncriticised custom, having little knowledge of the great world, and less concern for it. The century had not reached its close before a series of discoveries broke up this immemorial stability, and, amid the tremendous crisis of the Revolutionary Wars, inaugurated a period of rapid and

continuing movement. "Modern history, beginning from the England of 1780," writes Mr. GEORGE TREVELYAN, "is a series of dissolving views." That is unquestionably true: and its truth has never been more amazingly disclosed than during the last ten years. And, perhaps, the changes of Time have been nowhere more apparent than in this district, where a vast industrial society has gathered upon the sites of monastic retirement. Set this pitiless truth of change beside the word of the Apostle: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever.*" Here is the identifying factor in historic Christianity. CHRIST'S Religion, as it traverses the centuries, attracts, absorbs, assimilates, the various truth which Humanity has garnered from its experience; and in the process it becomes so transformed in aspect and method as to suggest a loss of essential identity. But there is a limit to the change. CHRIST'S Religion is the reflection on earth of the mystery of CHRIST'S Person. Over Him, "*Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,*" the changes and chances of this mortal life have no power. HE addresses Himself, not to the circumstances of men's lives which never continue in one stay, but to those deep needs of men's very selves, which never vary. "*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest*" is an Appeal which wins audience in the

twentieth century as successfully as in the first. The Message of the Cross is always the same—GOD'S Love meeting Man's Sin, the Self-sacrifice of GOD kindling the Repentance of Man. "*Jesus Christ and Him Crucified*" is the Gospel in its essence, and in its conquering power. Twelve hundred and fifty years ago the foundation of the Church in Monkwearmouth was well and truly laid on that sublime and unalterable truth, and these old walls attest both the fact and its power. In the course of time much has been built here on that foundation, much that had no right or title to survive, and which has perished, much also that has persisted and will persist for ever. The foundation stands firm. "*Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ.*" With the Cross the Church began: with the Cross it must continue.

> In the Cross of CHRIST I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of Time.

One of the best services that the study of ecclesiastical history can render to the individual Christian is the creation in his mind of a just sense of proportion. A knowledge of the past will set him free from the limited, and even perverted, perspectives of time and place. He will see the mighty and ever-waxing movement of Christianity through the centuries as one

GEN. THEO. SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

Fact, the March of CHRIST through Time. He can rise above the narrowing prejudices of sect and party, and claim his Birthright in the Church Universal. He will face the tasks which are immediately before him without dismay because he knows that CHRIST'S Church has faced and accomplished greater tasks before. "History," said my great predecessor, BISHOP LIGHTFOOT, "is a cordial for drooping spirits." With its memories of patience and victory in mind we can face the enemy in his pride and power with the bold words of the persecuted Huguenot: *"The Church of GOD is an anvil which has broken many hammers."* With the history of 1,250 years of Christian work and witness unfolding itself before our eyes we cannot yield to the mood of depression or the suggestion of unbelief. *"God is our hope and strength: a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear though the earth be moved: and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof rage and swell: and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same. The rivers of the Flood thereof shall make glad the City of God: the holy place of the tabernacle of the most highest. God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall help her, and that right early."*

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., 52, Long Acre, London, W.C. 2.—13985-24.

Gaylord Bros.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

280.3S
Henson, H.H. H398c

280.3S
H398c

C0-AYL-554